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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Environment Connecticut Program Director
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy & Technology Committee
Tuesday, March 16, 2010

Regarding HB 5505, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRIC RATE RELIEF

Representative Nardello, Senator Fonfara, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony commenting on HB 5505. Environment Connecticut is a statewide, member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization. One of our top priorities is advocacy for clean energy policies that benefit our environment and strengthen our economy.

We offer these comments on specific sections of HB 5505 as follows:

Section 3:

Environment Connecticut opposes the expansion of nuclear power generation. Although this section only requires the Connecticut Energy Advisory Board to conduct a study of the "costs and benefits" of new nuclear power generation, we are concerned that such an effort would unnecessarily divert resources away from more pressing issues.

New nuclear power plants are prohibitively expensive compared to investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. Dollar for dollar, efficiency and renewable can provide Connecticut far more "bang for the buck" than new nuclear generation.

Nuclear power plant construction would cost \$6 billion or more based on current data. Over the life of a new reactor, the electricity generated could cost ratepayers as much as 20 cents per kilowatt-hour.

For more discussion of the economic and environmental pros and cons of investment in new nuclear generation versus energy efficiency and renewable generation, please refer to the recent report, "Generating Failure," available at <http://www.environmentconnecticut.org/reports/global-warming/global-warmingprogram-reports/generating-failure>.

Sections 33 and 34:

As the committee is aware, Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) currently requires increasing amounts of our electricity to be procured from clean, renewable sources. By 2020, 20% of our state's electricity must come from sources such as wind, solar and fuel cells. RPS statutes are the most effective, proven policy tool for states to incentivize new renewable energy generation.

Connecticut was one of the first states to enact a RPS requirement a decade ago. Today, more than half the states nationwide have enacted RPS statutes, and many are expanding their statutes. For instance, the governor of Delaware recently proposed expanding that state's RPS requirement to 30% by the year 2030 and creating a preference for renewable generation sited in Delaware.
<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20100311/BUSINESS/3110335/1003/Mar-kell+pushes+for+renewable+energy>.

Environment Connecticut strongly opposes Section 34 of HB 5505. As we read this section, it would direct the DPUC to modify Connecticut's RPS requirement based the department's determination of a "maximum rate increase" resulting from renewable energy. Such a provision would undermine growth in renewable energy by introducing significant uncertainty regarding the amount of renewable generation that would be required by Connecticut in future years.

We urge the committee to reject this provision and retain Connecticut's existing RPS statute.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps
Program Director
Environment Connecticut